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REMARKS

Claims 1, 13, and 15 are amended hereby. Accordingly, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1-16 will remain pending. Since claims 4-12 have been withdrawn from further consideration, claims 1-3 and 13-16 are currently being examined.

In the Final Office Action dated June 7, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2 and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Deutsch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,309,664). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Deutsch et al. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections asserted by the Examiner and, therefore, respectfully traverses the same.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner responded to the Applicant's prior remarks by noting that the claims do not recite a "flow of current" between various recited elements. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of the claims as previously presented. It is clear from the claims as previously presented that the probe was electrically coupled to the second apparatus permitting flow of current therebetween. However, the Applicant has amended the claims to positively recite this additional clarifying language. The Applicant respectfully submits that, in making this Amendment, the Applicant has not added new matter such that additional searching by the Examiner is or should be required. In this regard, the Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention, for example, to Fig. 7 and paragraph [0024]. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner not issue an Advisory Action stating that the claim amendments require additional searching.

The Applicant respectfully points out that Deutsch et al. does not describe or suggest each and every feature of claims 1-3 and 13-16 and, accordingly, cannot be relied upon to anticipate or render obvious any of claims 1-3 and 13-16. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections in view of Deutsch et al.

Claims 1-3 and 13-16 are patentable over Deutsch et al. at least because they recite an apparatus for monitoring the connection status of a connector, a method for signaling disconnection between a first apparatus and a second apparatus, and a method for using a probe to monitor disconnection between a first apparatus and a second apparatus, that combine a number of features including, among them, an electrical coupling between the probe and the second apparatus when the first and second apparatuses are coupled, which closes an electrical circuit to permit current flow between the probe and the second apparatus

FINK — 10/807,383

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so that, when the first apparatus and the second apparatus are separated, the probe disengages from the second apparatus to signal disconnection between the first and second apparatuses by breaking the electrical circuit. Deutsch et al. neither describes nor suggests any of the combinations recited by claims 1-3 and 13-16. Accordingly, Deutsch et al. cannot be relied upon to anticipate or render obvious these claims.

Deutsch et al. describes a vehicle automatic door lock and indicator device with a normally closed electrical switch 56 mounted in the bore 44 of a block 46. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 5-6.) The block 46 contains a button 58 that engages the end 40 of a bolt 32 to open the switch 56 when the bolt 32 extends into the bore 44 to lock the door 12. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 6-9.) Electrical leads 60 connect the normally closed switch 56 to an indicator lamp 62, which indicates if the bolt 32 is properly seated in the bore 44. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 9-13.) When the ignition switch 66 is turned on, the lamp 62 remains lit until the sliding bolts for all of the door locks are in engagement with their respective switches 56, 56a, 56b, and 56c. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 25-28.) A time delay switch 70 is included to de-energize the coils 20, 20a, 20b, and 20c so that the doors of the automobile 14 may be opened temporarily even though the ignition switch 66 is on. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 29-32.) When the coils 20, 20a, 20b, 20c are re-energized, the doors 12 are automatically locked. (Deutsch et al. at col. 3, lines 32.35.)

At no point does Deutsch et al. describe that the door 12 and the door jamb or post 48 are electrically connected to one another. Moreover, there is no discussion of a probe that is electrically connected to the door jamb 48 when the door 12 is closed. As Deutsch et al. makes clear, switch 56 is normally closed, which means that an electrical current flows therethrough. The bolt 32 opens the switch 56 by pressing on the button 58. The coils 20 are normally energized to lock the doors 12 by acting upon the bolt 32 via the lever 24. Therefore, when the door 12 is closed, the switch 56 is opened (no flow of current) and the coil 20 is energized. There is no discussion of a flow of electricity from the coil 20 to the switch 56 through the lever 24. In addition, the fact that switch 56 is opened means that the current in the switch 56 has been disrupted.

At least in view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that Deutsch et al. does not describe each and every feature of as combined by claims 1-3 and 13-16. Moreover, the Applicant respectfully submits that the reference cannot suggest the combinations recited because the operation of Deutsch et al. is antithetical to that of the

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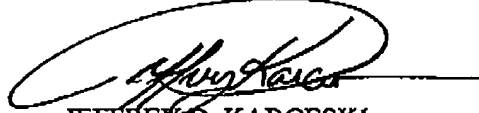
present invention. As a result, the Applicant respectfully submits that Deutsch et al. cannot anticipate or render obvious any of claims 1-3 and 13-16.

Each of the rejections having been addressed, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and pass claims 1-3 and 13-16 quickly to issuance.

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Respectfully submitted,

PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN LLP



JEFFREY D. KARCESKI

Reg. No. 35914

Tel. No. 202.663.8403

Customer No. 00909

Date: September 5, 2006
P.O. Box 10500
McLean, VA 22102
(703) 770-7900